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Improving the Quality of eGOV Strategies in Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania through Citizen Participation in eGOV Planning

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The views contained inside remain solely those of the author who may be contacted at sokolova@policy.hu. For a fuller account of this policy research project, please visit <http://www.policy.hu/sokolova>.

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Executive Summary

During the past few years, most government agencies in Belarus, Ukraine and Lithuania have established a public face online, and developed eGov related programs.

But many decision-makers and researchers still concentrate onesidedly on the provision of electronic services and not their uses, and these actors generally regard society's participation in developing e-governance as unnecessary and complicating. The State's present emphasis on e-services and access has negative consequences for good governance if it remains focused on creating "markets of individual users" rather than on creating a collaborative and networked participatory e-government. Instead, citizen participation should become a core principle in eGov (e-government and e-governance) planning.

To achieve citizen-enhanced eGovernance, Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian CSOs should work together through coalitions and networks advocating for a new agenda at international, regional, national and local levels with different constituencies. Specific mechanisms to promote citizen participation in eGov planning could include:

- *Networking*. On a regional level, Belarusian- Ukrainian-Lithuanian E-citizens Network could become a cross-border space that includes governmental officials, parliamentarians, citizens and citizens groups in the three countries.
- *Monitoring* intended to analyze eGov initiatives on national levels from the 'public interest' point of view.
- *Public Interest Campaigning (Awareness Building)* at national and local levels.
- *Bargaining* (agreements on cooperation between not-for-profit sector and governments) in order to institutionalize CSOs efforts.
- *Advocacy for changing policies on eGov* issues through influence on specific projects by means of direct citizen participation in decision making process on local level; lobbying and coalition building at national and local level; dialogue with international bodies in charge with eGov issues.

These strategies will enable civil society actors in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine to effect a transition to collaborative or networking eGovernance and to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement in the three countries.

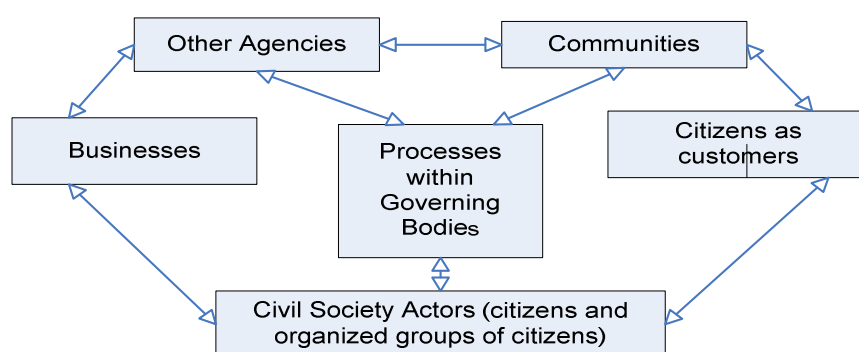
1 eGovernance as a quality concept

One of the principal goals of eGov programs has initially been to utilize new information technologies in order to achieve efficiency in public management. But technological approach has gradually been extended to include more qualitative objectives such as increased citizens participation, enhanced accessibility of public services, improvement of public management methods, decentralization of administration and more transparency in decision making.

eGovernance offers the prospect of at least ten major administrative (e-government) and democratic (e-democracy) improvements:

- cheaper and more effective management and processing of information;
- a freer flow of information between departments, agencies and layers within government;
- more professional administrators, supported by standardized, electronically-embedded decision-making systems;
- the routine provision of services according to impersonal rules, as opposed to clientelist arrangements;
- transparency, particularly in relation to the procurement of government services;
- opportunities to work in partnership with the private sector in modernizing governmental processes;
- a freer flow of information between government and citizens;
- the strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions, such as parliaments, local government, civil society organizations (CSOs) and independent media;
- opportunities for citizens to participate more directly in policy development;
- opportunities to combine traditional and modern methods of accountability¹

Figure 1. Focal Points of eGov Initiatives²



¹ S. Coleman, *African eGovernance –opportunities and challenges*. 2002 . Retrieved from http://213.225.140.43/english/report/background/coleman_background.pdf (14.01.2006)

² Adapted from R. Heeks, *eGovernment for Development Basic Definitions Page Retrieved from*

In broader terms, eGovernance is understood as the performance of good governance via the electronic medium in order to bring about a change in how citizens relate to governments and to each by providing tools for

- - increasing transparency of the political process,
- - enhancing the direct involvement and participation of citizens;
- - improving the quality of opinion formation by opening new spaces of information and deliberation³.

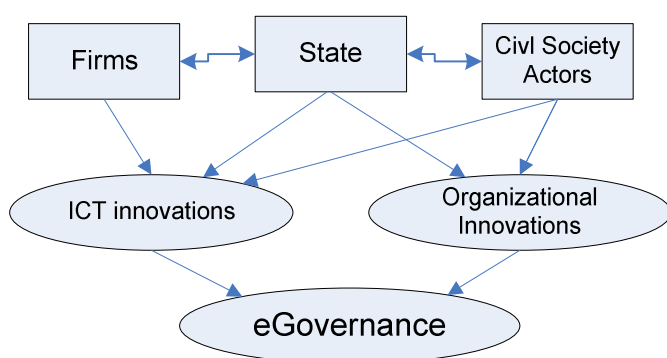
Major qualitative characteristics of eGovernance may be defined as the following

- broader and more direct participation of citizens in policy development;
- strengthening of intermediary democratic institutions;
- free flow of information;
- accessible and individualized service delivery;
- improved accountability and transparency of governing bodies.

The overarching goal in this context is to effect a transition to collaborative or networking e-governance in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement.

Implementing of an eGovernance initiative (program or project) means changing institutional relationships and depends on the involvement of partners, both from civil society and business, encouraging citizen participation in the decision-making process and making government more accountable, transparent and effective.

Figure 2 Model of eGovernance Planning⁴



<http://www.e-devexchange.org/eGov/egovdefn.htm> (14.01.2006)

³ European Parliaments Research Initiative. Knowledge Base on Parliamentarians and ICT .Retrieved from <http://epri.mykbase.de/epri> (14.01.2006)

⁴ Adapted from T., Sreekumar Civil Society and The State-led Initiatives in ICTs: The Case of Kerala. Retrieved from <http://www.iimahd.ernet.in/egov/ifip/dec2002/article2.htm> (14.01.2006)

In this light public servants need to learn to consult the public; elected officials should facilitate engagement, overview experimentation in new ways to obtain public input into eGov planning, and both renew and ensure accountability

Furthermore, if empowered civil society, empowered citizen participation, interactive and more transparent decision making are some of the central elements of eGovernance civil society actors should actively pursue a role in constituting the ways in which the new technologies are conceived and put to use. On the other hand, civic engagement in eGovernance programming would provide a basis for a sustainable e-governance strategy; increase the efficiency of policy; enhance overall implementation capacity; and catalyze greater coordination via developing new partnerships and networks.

2 Pitfalls of current agenda

Governments in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus are pursuing e-government transformation in one way or another; policymakers in each country have adopted different eGov approaches defined by dominating visions of governance. For the Lithuanian government, e-services are priority⁵. The Belarusian concept of eGovernment is based on strengthening the managerial capacities of national and local governments⁶. Governmental resolutions in Ukraine emphasize information provision and transparency as key elements of electronic government⁷.

2.1 Definitions

Lithuania

In Lithuanian documents one cannot find common definition of e-government. Some definitions focus on technology, others emphasize service or competence of public

⁵ *On the Approval of the Conception of the National Information Society Development of Lithuania*. Resolution of the Government of the Republic of Lithuania. No. 229, 28 February. 2001. Vilnius. <http://www3.lrs.lt/owa-bin/owarepl/inter/owa/U0091079.doc> (25.09.2005); *Position Paper on E-Government*. 2002. <http://europa.eu.int/idabc/en/document/1343/403> (25.09.2005)

⁶ Государственная программа информатизации Республики Беларусь на 2003-2005гг. и на перспективу до 2010 года «Электронная Беларусь». 2002. http://www.mpt.gov.by/baza/ebelarus_prog.htm (25.09.2005)

⁷ "Про заходи щодо створення електронної інформаційної системи "Електронний уряд". Постанова Кабінету Міністрів України від 24 лютого 2003 року № 208 <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=208%2D2003%2D%EF&print=1> (25.09.2005); Ukrainian version of this

administration. Usually the definitions point out that e-government is a provider of public services in distant way⁸. E-government is understood as a tool for implementation of a public administration reform and state functions⁹. The concept of eGovernment, formulated by the Ministry of Interior, is coordinated with eEurope + action plan (europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/2005/all_about/action_plan/index_en.htm), which says only about government online: electronic access to public services with related benchmarks – percentage of basic public services available online, public use of government on-line services and percentage of public procurement which can be carried out on-line.

Belarus

The eBelarus program defines “electronic government” as automated information – analytical systems to support decision-making process concerning governing economic development of the country, which will foster improvement and efficiency of central government and of local administrations on the basis of information and communication technologies¹⁰. However, this definition is not satisfactory even for governmental actors. There is an understanding that e-government is much broader concept and includes: internal administration efficiency through a developed corporate network with the focus on coordination of subdivisions activities; information-analytical system (data-base) for long term strategies development; creation of a unified data bases for public use; services for specific target groups.

Ukraine

According to Ukrainian eGov projects “electronic government” is a system, through which informational-legal relationships among executive power bodies and between the latter and citizens and juridical persons are realized by way of use of Internet-technologies¹¹. At the same time, State Committee on Communications and

resolution: <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi-bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=3175%2D15>

⁸ L. Zailiskaite, *E-government Implementation in Lithuania*. 2004.

<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN017789.pdf> (25.09.2005)

⁹ A. Matulis, *The prospect of coordination of information society development process*. 2004.

www.infobalt.lt/docs/Prezentacija_2004_10_19.ppt (25.09.2005)

¹⁰ М. Мясникович, М. Маханек, Программа “Электронная Беларусь” — стратегия вхождения Республики Беларусь в мировое информационное общество. *Вестник связи International*, 4:2003: 6-10 <http://www.vestnik-sviaz.ru/inter/arch/0403/program.html> (25.09.2005)

¹¹ *Draft law on E-Ukraine state programme*. 2004. Retrieved from <http://www.stc.gov.ua/data->

Informatization website (http://www.stc.gov.ua/ukrainian/info/el_ukraine) suggests the term “e-state” (“електронна держава”), which means: wide usage of modern ways of communications, Internet in particular, at all levels of state governing – from central government to local administrations; introducing of electronic workflow in government agencies; integration of local agencies’ networks into a unified government network; internet access for civil servants; provision of interactive participation of citizens in “state processes”, in particular in elections. It is indicative that in the parliamentary recommendations on the issues of information society development, the term “electronic government” is mentioned only in the relation to integrated governmental information system (Clause II.1.a). Services to citizens and businesses are considered separately in clause IV.1.a, without any references to “electronic government” sphere¹².

In all three countries, there is no standard official definition of e-government. In legislative acts, e-government is broadly described as computerization, automation (replaces current human-executed processes) and informatization (provides information supports to current human-executed processes or/and e-services). That complicates any assessment of e-government progress and hinders the shift to an “e-governance paradigm”. Absence of the comprehensive concept of eGovernance leads to misunderstanding of eGov (and the host of notions associated with it) as a merely governmental (public administration) issue.

2.2 Focus

The described above approaches to eGov issues entail three deficits of current agendas in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus:

- prevailing a customer relationship management model (public as customer);
- focus on technical issues;
- emphasis on access, not on participation.

2.2.1 Public as customer.

Customer relationship management mode (CRM)¹, while suggesting new opportunities, bears some risks presented in the table below.

storage/660/doc660.rtf (25.09.2005)

¹² Recommendations of Parliamentary hearing on Developing Information society in Ukraine (01.12.2005, No 3175-IV) Retrieved from <http://zakon.rada.gov.ua/cgi->

*Table 1. Opportunities and Risks of CRM*¹³

Opportunities	Risks
Customer oriented	Close one-to-government communication; Tendency to provide online spaces for individuals' polling rather than group and individual deliberation
Services provided more equitably	Less attention to the use of ICT as a tool for empowering citizens to solve their own problems or as a means to deliberate with other citizens and participate in agenda setting
Emphasis on efficiency and good quality of services	The fordist style approach to e-government is not a means to creative, curious and interested citizens
	Services confused with participation, transparency and accountability

In practice, a customer-oriented approach in a local setting would make e-government a kind of a non-transparent black box. This "black box" model may result in weakening perceptions and understanding of the fundamental obligations of citizens and public servants. That is why the "black box of CRM-supported ICT" needs to be opened, to expose decisions corresponding to the design, deployment and procurement of these systems, in addition to their implementation¹⁴.

2.2.2 Focus on access

Governments putting online their legislation, legislative proposals and background documents on issues may be a start towards bringing more citizens into the process. Nevertheless, it is still very much a top-down approach by government. As an analysis, shows the groups and individuals engaged in e-democracy mainly rely on the agenda, set by government and react to what government is doing to create input¹⁵.

bin/laws/main.cgi?nreg=3175%2D15) (14.01.2006)

¹³ K., Reilly, R. Echeberria, (2003). The Place of Citizens and CSOs in E-Government. A Study of Electronic Government in Eight Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Retrieved from <http://www.katherine.reilly.net/presentations.html> (25.09.2005)

¹⁴ P Richter, et al. (2004) The e-Citizen as talk, as text and as technology: CRM and e-Government. *Electronic Journal of e-Government* Volume 2. Issue 3. (207-218). Retrieved from <http://www.ejeg.com/volume-2/volume2-issue3/v2-i3-art7-richter.pdf> (25.09.2005)

¹⁵ B., Riley, and K., Riley (2003). *E-Governance to E-democracy: Examining the Evolution. International Tracking Survey Report '03 N 5*. Retrieved from www.electronicgov.net/pubs/research_papers/tracking03/IntlTrackRptJune03no5.pdf (25.07.2005)

Access and participation are key challenges for a new eGov agenda advocacy. However, it was noted by some theorists that the terms are often confused (the former substituting the latter). Either “we have access with a desire that it be participatory,” or we have subjects who are considered only as “users of communication, information networks and the media”¹⁶.

The present emphasis on access has several perverse effects:

- a growing ease of access makes participation more difficult and can inhibit it (and vice versa), generating more dependency, paternalism and social cybernetization, which explains the fact that the word “access” abounds in hierarchical business discourse, while participation scarcely appears;
- saturating the access function, to the point of dumping, discourages and inhibits any potential will to participate on the part of receivers;
- receiving others’ knowledge and opinion without a counterpart can only institutionalize the muteness of the receiver/consumer.

As Pasquali writes, “there is no lack of experiments in raising the access threshold, measuring how much messaging the user can still take in. (Urban neighborhoods have been saturated with up to 500 television channels.) Meanwhile, a modest participatory project, such as a small, nearby television station managed by the community itself, would do what no overdose of access can ever do: improve relations, generate participation and promote genuine communication”¹⁷. Pasquali warns against access hypertrophy, which can lead to serious participatory atrophy.

2.3 Motivations and drivers

eGov projects in Lithuania, Belarus and Ukraine are generally market and international context driven rather than strategic choices. In Ukraine and Belarus, they are stimulated largely by the strong demand from businesses and from governments’ desire to standardize its operations, and to implement more effective managerial controls. For instance, Ukrainian Minister of Transport and Communications Viktor Bondar, speaking at 2005 WSIS meeting, concentrated on e-commerce and electronic

¹⁶ A. ,Pasquali, (2003) A Brief Descriptive Glossary of Communication and Information (Aimed at Providing Clarification and Improving Mutual Understanding. In Bruce G. and Ó Siochrú S.(Eds) *Communicating in the Information Society*, Geneva, UNRISD. Retrieved from <http://files.crisinfo.org/cris/pasquali.pdf> (25.07.2005).

¹⁷ A. ,Pasquali, (2003) A Brief Descriptive Glossary of Communication and Information (Aimed at Providing Clarification and Improving Mutual Understanding. In Bruce G. and Ó Siochrú S.(Eds) *Communicating in the Information Society*, Geneva, UNRISD. Retrieved from <http://files.crisinfo.org/cris/pasquali.pdf> (25.07.2005)

digital signature issues. Ukrainian civil society organizations occasionally raise issues of accountable and transparent government through introduction of new ICTs, but they lack sustained strategies.

Governments in all three countries consider an online presence important for their international image. Lithuania, being an EU member, is far more driven by the international context as well as EU practice. At the same time, “smooth functioning of public institutions” as well as transparency were mentioned among the prospects opened up by “application of the achievements of ICTs in public administration” by Mr. Antanas Zenonas Kaminskas, chancellor of the Government, in his statement at the 2005 WSIS meeting. “By implementing e-government package, our government aims at to create a favorable legal and institutional environment for investment and innovation”, noted Lithuanian Chancellor¹⁸.

2.4 Actors and leadership

Governments. In all countries under discussion governments are major stakeholders in eGov programming as it is connected, in one way or another, with administrative reforms; governments take the role of leaders and set agendas in eGov programming.

Representative bodies. The role of parliaments highly depends on the individual will and capacities of MPs, as in Lithuania, where only members of the Seimas Information Society Committee in 2000-2004 were active advocates of eGov initiatives. National legislators do little about policies regarding eGovernance. Few parliamentarians have personal expertise on the issues, and in most cases, they do not have adequate professional staff to support them with these matters. Parliamentarians in the three countries barely discuss eGov strategies, and even if they do, they still have little influence on what the government actually implements.

Private sector, especially national IT application developers are normally seen by governments as essential partners, as a source of information and finance, as well as an ICT products supplier. But, too many IT firms, IT consultants, government officials forget that the public sector remains fundamentally different from the private sector. Administrations pick up an information system designed for the private sector and try to

¹⁸ A. Kaminskas, Statement from Lithuania . WSIS Tunis 17 November 2005 . Plenary Session4
<http://www.itu.int/wsisis/tunis/statements/docs/g-lithuania/1.html>

adjust it to a very different public sector reality. "The large design-reality gap generates lots of heat and noise, not much light and, ultimately, plenty of failure"¹⁹.

CSOs and citizens. CSOs regard their participation in eGov projects as the means to enhance human capacities and to empower local communities. Civil society organizations remain passive receivers of information – only access and not participation (active contribution) is expected from them. Citizens occasionally are invited to discuss some eGov issues, but the absence of an established institutional framework for deliberative participation makes such initiatives futile. That entails reality gaps in eGov planning, when the values and objectives of the government designed programs do not correspond to values, objectives and skills of real end users.

Partnerships. There is a general understanding in all the three countries that eGov programs can be implemented on the basis of multistakeholder cooperation. There is a strong feeling that "it is necessary to stimulate the co-operation of government, representative bodies, civil society organizations and international structures in order to provide conditions for the development of a common infrastructure"²⁰. However, though each country has established public – private partnerships²¹, a multistakeholder approach to eGov planning and implementation is still to be adopted.

The lower and middle bureaucracy, organized groups of citizens, and local communities, not to mention individual citizens, remain passive and unresponsive to the eGov efforts of their governments. The same passivity characterizes representative bodies. Citizen groups are not recognized as valuable contributors to eGov agendas. Even in Ukraine, where civil society actively tries to win a place in information society agenda setting, the government remains the main player in the sphere of eGov. As a result, only senior government officials, national private ICT businesses, academic

¹⁹ R. Heeks, *Most eGovernment-for-Development Projects Fail: How Can Risks be Reduced?* 2003 Institute for Development Policy and Management, Manchester P. 5
<http://unpan1.un.org/intradoc/groups/public/documents/NISPAcee/UNPAN015488.pdf>

²⁰ V. Popov, *Speech to the Second Belarusian International Information Technologies and Law Conference*. 2004 <http://www.dmeurope.com/default.asp?ArticleID=4185> (25.09.2005)

²¹ Belarus: Internet Forum (<http://www.by2000.net/>) and Belarus Development Gateway Partnership (belarus.belarusgateway.org/en/belarus/websites/domains.php?categoryID=1644); Ukraine: the Ukraine Development Gateway Project team established NGO "Ukraine e-Development Association" in 2001 (<http://www.e-ukraine.org/e-ukraine/about/>), the Information Society of Ukraine Foundation (<http://www.isu.org.ua/>), Institute of the Information Society (<http://e-ukraine.org.ua/eng/institute.htm>), International Renaissance Foundation (www.irf.kiev.ua/) and Internews (<http://www.internews.org/regions/ukraine.htm>); Lithuania: Knowledge Economy Forum (<http://www.zef.lt>), Infobalt (www.infobalt.lt/english/). Knowledge Economy Forum, and "Window to the future".

institutions lobbying groups, and, to some extent, international bodies assume influential roles in eGov programming.

Leadership. Lack of dialogue between government bodies, intermediary institutions and civil society actors entails the situation when the leadership is generally exercised at administrative level. That often presents the temptation of creating a showpiece for the presidency rather than implementing real change, or picking easy targets for short term political gain, rather than fundamental change for long term societal gain. Moreover, programming appears to be dependent on policy cycles (elections, ministerial changes, etc): when masters change, the program faces serious continuity issues²².

In case of exclusive executive agencies leadership, there is always a danger that limited number of privileged groups with close relations to governments excludes other interests. These trends may result in disjuncture, misguided programming, lack of transparency and hidden agendas, as well as in undermining the desire of actors outside governments to offer support.

In spite of differences in political context, current eGov agendas in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus are characterized by common deficits: absence of comprehensive concept of eGovernance; prevailing a customer relationship management model (CRM); administrative leadership in eGov related initiatives; emphasis on access, not on participation.

These deficits affect the quality of eGovernance planning in three ways

- the centralized use of technologies by national government departments, without devolving the benefits of technology to intermediary institutions, such as local government, parliament, parties, civil-society organizations and the independent media;
- a failure to provide broader and more direct participation of citizens in policy development, i.e. to link better governance to broader and more inclusive democracy;
- a failure to avoid “reality gap” in eGov planning.

²² K., Reilly, and R., Echeberria (2003). The Place of Citizens and CSOs in E-Government. A Study of Electronic Government in Eight Countries in Latin America and the Caribbean. Retrieved from <http://www.katherine.reilly.net/presentations.html> (25.09.2005)

3 Civic leadership in promoting eGovernance agenda: demand for strategy

Since governments' attitudes to eGov issues are inadequate to provide society with qualitative eGovernance strategies, and since civil society is almost by definition one of the main beneficiaries of e-Governance, then civil society actors could and should fill a vacuum of leadership and assume the role of a "democratic corrective" in formulating and implementing eGov agenda by campaigning for citizens' eGov awareness building; providing incentives for broader citizens' participation in eGov discussions involving local governments, political parties, parliaments, and media into eGovernance debates.

The role of civic leadership is to mobilize people for qualitative eGovernance agenda setting; and to work with people to find citizen oriented solutions in eGovernance programming.

There are groups and individuals in the three countries sharing a wider vision of eGov issues. E-Belarus civil initiative (www.e-belarus.org), Lithuanian Communities portal (<http://www.bendruomenes.lt/en/static.php?strid=14336&>), e-uriadnik portal (<http://e-uriadnik.org.ua/>) , All-Ukrainian Foundation "Information Society of Ukraine" (<http://www.isu.org.ua/mission>) and some other groups are trying

- to pursue a role in constituting the ways in which the new technology are conceived,
- to promote transition from the public as "customer" to the public as "citizen",
- to bring eGov policy into better alignment with good governance values.

For them digital divide, telecommunications infrastructure and e-services remain key issues for eGov programs but more stress is put on citizen participation and public value approach. They are aware of the fact that the potential of eGov goes far beyond early achievements of online public services and they see eGov as ICT remedies for democratic deficiencies

These individuals and organizations outside governments are engaged in recruiting "minipublics" or in developing online communities of e-democracy supporters in order to bring to effect a transition to collaborative or networking e-governance in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement in all the three countries

They realize that in order to participate in a substantial sense, citizens need information, knowledge, resources, and the opportunity to participate.

In this light, the crucial tasks are

- to make people more knowledgeable about eGovernance issues;
- to promote public debate in order to prevent any single policy framework;
- to increase transparency of governing authorities, bringing their activities into public view;
- to enhance government accountability through monitoring procedures.

Civil society actors that successfully address these challenges can greatly enhance their impacts on eGov planning in their countries and do much more to trigger processes through which public (individuals, groups and organizations) take part in developing, administering and amending local and national programming and decision-making.

4 Guidelines for civic leadership to promote eGovernance agenda

In order to set an eGovernance agenda and to empower civic leadership in eGovernance programming, a system of capacity and awareness building strategies based on access to network tools, creating a cross-border institutional space, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy are to be developed.

Therefore, to achieve results Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian CSOs should work through coalitions and networks advocating for a new agenda and policy transformation at international, regional, national and local levels with different commonalities of constituencies.

4.1 Monitoring

Monitoring is the first step to be taken to increase CSOs activists' capacities and to analyze eGov and information society initiatives from the 'public interest' point of view. If civil society associations are to be effective public educators and campaigners on eGovernance issues, they need to devote considerable energy to determining: precisely what is going on in each country and in the region; exactly what they want; and specifically what should be done to reach the desired goals.

Monitoring and other research procedures expose problems and discrepancies, thus helping to develop effective advocacy strategies as it allow advocates to become fully aware of the nature and extent of discrepancies. Once an advocate is knowledgeable

about the facts concerning eGov issues and understands what requires attention and reform, she can devise an appropriate plan of action.

Monitoring often requires joint efforts of different institutions and sharing knowledge and experience on regional and national levels. Therefore, networking and coalition building are important parts of successful monitoring efforts.

4.2 Advocacy

In order to promote the new agenda and to influence the policy decision making system, a deliberate and systematic process of advocacy should be launched, because

Firstly, it is necessary to demonstrate that citizen participation issues are important for eGov agenda and therefore should be considered by governments as well as by public at large;

Secondly, in order to promote an issue, some form of citizen engagement policies are to be taken seriously and get a seat at the policy making table;

Thirdly, education and social mobilization could foster awareness building among stakeholders.

Thus, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy becomes building blocks of CSOs strategies.

4.2.1 Public interest campaigning

Broadly defined, a campaign is any sustained effort to focus attention on an issue or message in order to persuade people to change their views or to take certain actions. For campaigns to raise public awareness on eGovernance issues, the target audience may be the media and, directly or indirectly, the general public.

Creating inclusive and broad coalitions and networks that involve all or most of all actors interested in the issue strengthens a campaign by enabling it to exert far more political pressure than each organization acting individually could.

Successful public interest campaigning can result in the creation, adoption, and implementation of better strategies, laws and regulations. It ensures eGov policies that respond to the needs of the citizens. And, what is more important, it educates both the citizens and their leaders, promotes transparency and accountability, and gives voice to the concerns of constituencies. Public interest campaigns also contribute to the cohesion of civil society by strengthening coalitions and networks and by fostering collaboration among organizations.

Example

September 21, 2005: The first Parliamentary hearings on the development of the information society of Ukraine (<http://www.sluhannya.in.ua/>). Organizers: the Parliamentary Committee on Education and Science, the Cabinet of Ministers of Ukraine, the National Academy of Sciences, Internet Association of Ukraine, International NGO “Internews Ukraine”, International Renaissance Foundation, Microsoft Ukraine, and representative office of Intel in Ukraine

4.2.2 Bargaining

Bargaining (agreements on cooperation between not-for-profit sector and governments) in order to institutionalize civil society actors efforts becomes an important part of their policy transformation strategies. The ability of civil society actors to influence eGov planning depends considerably on their relationships with governing authorities. If official circles are knowledgeable about civil society groups and eager to involve them in policy processes, then the prospects for civil society are much enhanced. Yet if, on the contrary, ruling institutions are ignorant about civil society organizations, averse to engage with them and reluctant to allow them political space generally, then the prospects for democratization of the global economy via voluntary collective citizen action are substantially weakened²³.

One of the principal reasons for the desirability of systematic cooperation between the public and the not-for-profit sectors is the institutionalisation of CSOs efforts, and concentration of resources and knowledge for reaching better eGov. CSOs and coalitions of CSOs may be initiators of innovative eGov practices on local and national levels. In this case, they should have a general agreement with government on what they want to do and how they want to do it. The main idea of the agreement is to fix general framework for cooperation between the third sector and national government in abroad sense.

Example:

June 1, 2005. Ukrainian Ministry of Communications initiated negotiations on memorandum on cooperation between the State Communications and Informatization Department and Civil ICT Council (http://www.kmu.gov.ua/control/uk/publish/article?art_id=17371483&cat_id=3211754)

²³ J., Scholte *Democratizing the Global Economy. The Role of Civil Society*. 2004. Centre for the Study of Globalisation and Regionalisation University of Warwick

4.2.3 Lobbying

Lobbying can be a significant part of eGovernance advocacy campaign. Public interest lobbying refers to direct contact with decision makers on a particular issue in order to promote and influence eGov related strategies. Such decision makers may include, for example, politicians, members of a parliament (MPs), government officials, mayors, governors, and members of local councils. Lobbying, sometimes referred to as legislative advocacy, can mean discussing an issue with a legislator before a formal vote is taken, but it can also refer to urging a bureaucrat to take a particular action. Lobbying can also include providing basic information or analysis about an issue to a decision maker—without seeking a particular decision on a piece of legislation.

Example

June-December 2004: Round table discussions of eGov and Information society issues organized by UNDP/ Belarus and by the House of Representatives (lower chamber of Belarusian Parliament) within the framework of "ICT Support to Parliament" programme (<http://www.e-belarus.org/news/200401221.html>; <http://www.e-belarus.org/news/200403031.html>)

4.2.4 Influence on specific projects through direct citizen participation

Engaging ordinary citizens in deliberations about eGov priorities can increase legitimacy of civil society organizations as well as government actions, bring crucial local knowledge, add resources, and enhance public accountability. Properly organized direct citizen deliberation campaigns may lead to some very important results:

- individuals and community empowerment, will formation and articulation;
- developing linkages for decision makers to transmit preferences after they have been articulated and combined into a social choice,
- involvement of ordinary people affected by the problems and officials close to them;
- deliberative development of solutions to these problems.

Table 2 Direct citizens' deliberation. Basic principles²⁴

Strategies	Tactics	Principles	Results
Education	Educative forum	A focus on specific needs	Individuals and community empowerment, will formation and articulation
Collaboration Persuasion	Participatory advisory panels	Involvement of ordinary people affected by those problems and officials close to them	Develop linkages for decision makers to transmit preferences after they have been articulated and combined into a social choice
	Participatory problem solving	Deliberative development of solutions to these problems	Solving particular collective problems, reasoned social choice

4.2.5 Dialogue with international bodies

Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian civil society actors, networks and collaborations often see international bodies and organizations only as donors, and tend to underestimate the importance of information sharing and dialogue in a modern global networked society. Meanwhile, advocacy before international bodies can become a powerful tool to exert pressure on national eGov policies. That is why it is vital for nongovernmental organizations to understand the opportunities presented by the UN, the CoE, D-G Europe, European Parliament and other international bodies for involvement by NGOs.

It goes without saying that CSOs can play only with an understanding of charters, treaties, conventions, and other agreement provisions and treaty obligations. Of course, there are important similarities and distinctions between the regional and international

²⁴ Source: ²⁴ A., Fung, (2003, September) Recipes for Public Spheres: Eight Institutional Design Choices and Their Consequences. *Journal of Political Philosophy*, 338-67.

organizations, as well as among the mechanisms within a particular organization. Advocates must examine the relative advantages and disadvantages of each mechanism or instrument to determine which tool can best serve their goals, where and how these mechanisms have been used and consider the experience of other CSOs or individuals who have utilized such mechanisms or engaged in the advocacy process .

4.3 *Networking*

A key organizational capability for civil society groups that address issues of better eGov planning through the practices of monitoring, campaigning, bargaining, lobbying, and direct citizen participation in decision-making is the *ability to network effectively* – including across sectors and across countries.

Although the role of the state remains central in eGov programming in Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania, and although the state's position strongly shapes the possibilities for citizens and citizens groups participation, there remains an opportunity for a public space between community, social capital networks and those elements of government open to the possibilities of democratic participation using the medium of communication networks. Networks involve a pooling of civil society capacities. Through their links with each other, associations and individuals in a network share information and expertise. Cooperation can also circumvent duplications of effort and thereby generate savings on scarce resources. Networks encompassing different sectors of civil society can also be effective in promoting e-governance agenda. Access to network tools could create public spaces, in which new forms of relationship-building can circulate, and will allow for both the practical strengthening of grassroots democratic organizing and its growth and extension to new citizenship groups.

It's important that a collaboration be as inclusive as possible, including individuals from different agencies and organizations; different sectors of the community; and different levels of representation.

National coalitions (advocacy networks)

- develop a stronger public image,
- bring together diverse resources and ideas,
- help to avoid duplication of effort;
- have greater credibility than individual organizations and reduce suspicion of self-interest: seeing the breadth of groups the target bodies or policy makers cannot dismiss advocacy coalitions as "special interest groups."

Example

April-December 2003, IRF (Ukraine) initiated the formation of the Coalition and Forum of NON-Governmental Organizations of Telecommunications and ICT Sectors. The Coalition took an active part in preparation and presentation of the National report and the Draft Strategy for the Development of the Information Society at the World Summit of Information Society held in December 2003 in Geneva

Regional network as a cross-border institutional space, including wide variety of perspectives and constituents, could

- provide basis for sustainability in e-governance policies in spite of changing elites and governments in the three countries;
- create a broader, more comprehensive picture of eGovernance issues;
- facilitate developing and diffusing of best practices in the area;
- strengthen each country's position advocacy efforts before international bodies.

Furthermore, the emergence of regional network may provide space for a new role of civil society through regional blocks; CSOs can potentially gain greater influence with actors at the regional and global levels.

In order to be successful such a network should

- bring and share resources from different international partnerships;
- benefit from implementing common actions and from task-based learning dealing with the resolution of a local problems;
- play a 'catalyst' or 'moderator' role bring together different forms of expertise – technological, business, economic and social;
- keep the momentum of the development process going without trying to rush matters;
- keep the focus on achieving sustainable pragmatic results;
- devise and use methodologies that facilitate dialogue, joint deliberation, decision-making and conflict resolution.

Networking is an essential precondition for effective monitoring, advocacy and policy transformation activities of CSOs in eGovernance sphere.

5 Conclusion

1 .eGovernance as a qualitative concept is centered on empowered civil society, enhanced citizen participation, interactive and more transparent decision making. The overarching goal in this context is to effect a transition to collaborative or networking eGovernance in order to promote democratic values and principles of civic engagement

Current eGov projects in Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, characterized by absence of a comprehensive concept of eGovernance, by prevailing a customer relationship

management model, by administrative leadership and by emphasis on access, fail to address a qualitative concept of eGovernance as collaborative or networked governance.

Since governments' attitudes to eGov issues are inadequate to provide society with qualitative eGovernance strategies, and since civil society is almost by definition one of the main beneficiaries of e-Governance, then civil society actors could and should fill a vacuum of leadership and assume the role of a "democratic corrective" in formulating eGovernance agenda.

2. To bring eGov policy into better alignment with good governance values, and in order to participate in a substantial sense, citizens and various citizen groups should organize themselves to provide civic leadership for

- *making people more knowledgeable about eGovernance issues;*
- *promoting public debate in order to prevent any single policy framework;*
- *increasing transparency of governing authorities, bringing their activities into public view;*
- *enhancing government accountability through monitoring procedures.*

Civil society actors that successfully address these challenges can greatly enhance their impacts on eGov planning in their countries and do much more to trigger processes through which public (individuals, groups and organizations) take part in developing, administering and amending local and national programming and decision making

3. In order to set a new agenda, a system of capacity and awareness building strategies based on access to network tools, creating a cross-border institutional space, public interest campaigning and policy transformation advocacy are to be developed. Therefore, to achieve results Lithuanian, Belarusian and Ukrainian CSOs should work through coalitions and networks advocating for a new agenda and policy transformation at international, regional, national and local levels with different commonalities of constituencies.

4. Specific mechanisms to to promote citizen participation in eGov planning may include.

Networking. Networks and coalitions are especially important for capacity building and advocacy before national and international bodies in order to improve current eGov agenda, while direct citizen participation in deliberative process is vital to influence specific eGov projects. On regional level, Belarusian- Ukrainian-Lithuanian E-citizens

Network could become a cross border institutional space that will include governmental officials, parliamentarians, citizens and citizens groups in the three countries.

Monitoring intended to analyze eGov and information society initiatives on national levels from the ‘public interest’ point of view.

Public Interest Campaigning (Awareness Building) at national and local levels.

Compacting (general agreements on cooperation between not-for-profit sector and governments) in order to institutionalise CSOs’ efforts, and to concentrate resources and knowledge for reaching better eGov

Advocacy for changing policies on eGov issues through:

- *Influence on specific projects by means of direct citizen participation in decision-making process on local level;*
- *Lobbying and coalition building at national and local level;*
- *Dialogue between national and regional CSOs and international bodies.*

Using these mechanisms, civic leadership in agenda setting will provide a basis for a sustainable eGovernance strategy, which should aim at broader and more direct participation of citizens in eGovernance policy development; strengthening of intermediary institutions (parliaments, political parties, local governments, CSOs, independent media; free flow of information; improved accountability and transparency of governing bodies accessible and individualized service delivery.

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